

United States Government

Department of Energy
Albuquerque Operations Office

memorandum

DATE: September 25, 1997
REPLY TO: OMD
SUBJECT: Timely Notification of Emergencies and Significant Events
TO: John J. Nettles, Jr., Director, Office of Emergency Management, NN-60, HQ

REF: #1- Memorandum from Secretary Peña, subject Lessons Learned from the Emergency Response to the May 14, 1997, explosion at Hanford's Plutonium Reclamation Facility (PRF), dated August 27, 1997
#2- Memorandum from Secretary Peña, subject Timely Notification of Emergencies and Significant Events, dated August 27, 1997
#3- Memorandum from John Nettles, Office of Emergency Management, subject Reviews of Emergency Action Levels, dated September 5, 1997

The reference memoranda are being responded to with fixed deadlines as outlined below. All Albuquerque Operations Office (AL) sites have been briefed on the subject requirements as outlined in the above-mentioned memoranda. Copies of the memoranda were forwarded to all sites on September 17, 1997, by facsimile and a hard copy mailed. In addition, a conference call with all AL Area Offices was conducted on Monday, September 8, 1997, to begin a review of emergency management activities at each AL site. All AL Area Offices were instructed to validate activities from contractor responses to the implementation instructions.

Reference #1, Lessons Learned from the Emergency Response to the May 14, 1997, explosion at Hanford PRF

Action Item #1: a) Review of criteria, e.g., emergency action levels (EALs), used to determine emergency and significant event recognition and categorization to ensure all reasonable event indicators are adequately covered by procedures and reflect an expeditious process; b) review of training procedures; c) solicit the comment of other federal, state, local, and tribal agencies regarding the timely notification of all events of concern.

AL has advised NN-60 of our hosting of the pilot course titled, "Emergency Management Decision-Making," in Albuquerque, New Mexico, scheduled for October 8, 1997, at the Energy Training Center. All sites have been advised of this initiative. The course is designed for a maximum of 25 attendees and responses are

being received with full participation anticipated. Another class for Emergency Management personnel is scheduled at the Pantex Plant on October 9, 1997.

Reference #2, Timely Notification of Emergencies and Significant Events, dated August 27, 1997:

AL has received responses reviewing emergency management activities from the following area offices/contractor sites:

- LANL (AL site visit)
- Amarillo Area Office (AL site visit)
- Grand Junction Project Office
- Kansas City Plant
- Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP)
- ROSS Airlines
- AL/Transportation Safeguards Division
- Sandia National Laboratory/NM & CA

AL has devoted significant effort to the review of the issues raised by the Secretary's August 27, 1997, memo. Conclusions identified in this memorandum were supported by two site visits at LANL and the Pantex Plant. AL sites have sufficient processes in place to assure NN-60 and DP-23 that timely notification will occur. There is an understanding at our sites of what is defined as a "significant event."

AL sites have existing processes in place to train our Contractor Emergency Manager/Facility Managers and the Site DOE Facility Representative so that they are aware of the notification responsibilities stated within DOE Order 151.1. AL intends to strengthen this training in FY98 and to ensure that each facility representative/facility manager receives this training during the upcoming year.

AL sites have policies, procedures, and existing programs to communicate with their stakeholders regarding emergencies and significant events. The stakeholders, listed in attachment #1 to this memo, are those with which AL has developed a rapport regarding this issue.

Reference #3, Reviews of Emergency Action Levels, dated September 5, 1997

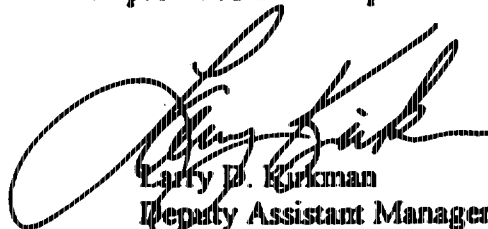
Action Item #2: a) Describe the technical basis for EALs at each site, and b) review of hazards assessments for adequacy of relevant EAL input information.

At AL sites, new EALs are not combined with existing EALs. They are not a collection of appendices, rather single, stand alone, updated documents which are reviewed and

revisions are provided as a single reference document. AL has reviewed the hazards assessments. High-hazard facilities are priorities and hazard assessments are expedited for completion. Medium and low-hazards facilities are scheduled for hazard assessments based on the graded approach. Scheduled hazard assessments are further defined in the site's annual Emergency Readiness Assurance Plan and are based on budget and resource availability to accomplish activities each year.

A review of our contractor site's EALs indicates no inappropriate terminology relative to chemical concentrations for evaluating emergency exposures, e.g., threshold limit values, and permissible exposure limits to personnel. Standard definitions as stated in DOE Orders are used. AL sites use Emergency Response Planning Guidelines (ERPG) and Workplace Environment Exposure Levels to assist emergency response personnel in analysis of the potential impact of simulated accidental release of chemicals to the environment. ERPGs values are intended to provide estimates of concentration ranges beyond which one could reasonably anticipate observing adverse health effects, both in and out of the workplace.

A biweekly conference call has been initiated with all Area Offices to discuss the progress of the specific initiatives being reviewed by contractor sites. AL management will continue this process until there is clear resolution of the issues described in the referenced memoranda. Your office will be provided a final report on the results.



Larry D. Kirkman
Deputy Assistant Manager
Office of Technical Management
and Operations

Attachment

cc w/attachment :

J. Maisonet, DP-23, HQ
P. Higgins, OMD, AL
G. Carroll, EMB/OMD, AL
T. Gutierrez, EMB/OMD, AL
W. Simpson, EMB/OMD, AL

DOE/AL Site Stakeholders

During FY-97 the following sites have worked with these agencies on the issue of timely notification:

Pantex Plant:

- Potter County**
- Carson County**
- City of Amarillo**
- Randall County**
- Armstrong County**
- State of Texas Department of Public Safety**
- State of Texas Bureau of Radiation Control**
- State of Texas, Governor's Office**

Los Alamos National Laboratory:

- Pueblo of San Ildefonso**
- Los Alamos County & Fire Department**
- State of New Mexico EOC**
- Rio Arriba County**

Currently, LANL/Community Involvement Office and BUS-4, Transportation Office is working on a plan with the University of California (UC) to reach out and involve Northern New Mexico communities in emergency planning/transportation issues/and increased training of outside agencies on issues facing them as neighbors of LANL.

Sandia National Laboratory/New Mexico

- City of Albuquerque**
- County of Bernalillo**
- Isleta Pueblo**
- LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) - City/County Sponsored**
- FEMA, Region VI, Denton, Texas**
- NRC, Region IV Irving, TX**

Sandia National Laboratory/California

- City of Livermore, CA**
- City of Pleasanton, CA**
- Alameda County**
- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory**
- State of California, Office of Emergency Services/EOC**

**Albuquerque Operations Office, Emergency Management Branch
City of Albuquerque, & City of Alb. Fire Department
State of New Mexico - Department of Public Safety & State Police
FEMA, Region VI, - Denton, Texas
Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico**

DOE/AL/Transportation Safeguards Division

Every two to four years, TSD contacts each of the 48 governors to reintroduce TSD to them and to verify emergency contact for each state. There is followup with each state so that TSD is confident that there is a communication network point on contact within each state that TSD transports through.

Grand Junction Project Office:

**Colorado Office of Emergency Management
Mesa County Emergency Manager
Grand Junction Emergency Planning Commission
Grand Junction Fire Department**

Kansas City Plant:

Missouri Department of Natural Resources is the prime off-site agency. This agency has a full-time employee located at the plant and this employee has reviewed and approved the emergency response procedures and notification requirements.

Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP):

**City of Carlsbad, New Mexico
County of Eddy, New Mexico**